VISIT…

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

A short adventure for four 8th-level player characters

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INTRODUCTION

When your ire has been raised, when you have been wronged, when someone has crossed you too many times—it's time to contact the Council of Wrath. This small but extremely efficient band specializes in vengeance. And woe to those who find them looking in their direction.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S® Guide*, and the *MONSTER MANUAL®* to use this adventure.

Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase when appropriate. Unshaded boxes contain important information for you, including special instructions. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the proper page in the *MONSTER MANUAL* is referenced.

BACKGROUND

The Council of Wrath is an organization of mercenaries that fulfils a need—revenge. Mainly made up of assassins, the Council will do whatever it is hired to do to get revenge for a wronged party. This includes blackmail, public humiliation, destruction of property, and other illegal activities.

CHARACTER HOOKS

You don't need hooks to get the player characters (PCs) into this adventure. It comes to them. What group of heroes, by the time they have reached 8th level, has not incurred the wrath of someone powerful or wealthy enough to hire the Council of Wrath to eliminate them? Whether it is the angry wizard whose tower the PCs broke into, or the orc king incensed after they sacked his fortress, somebody, somewhere wants the PCs dead.

The Council of Wrath is up to the task.

THE COUNCIL

The Council of Wrath has six members. Dorath Kir (see next page) is the undisputed leader, although the half-elf Varimer remains the tactician. Each fulfils an important role, and the group works well together—despite the generally evil and selfish natures of its members.

Dorath Kir

Dorath is the glue that binds the Council of Wrath together. He formed the group and gathered together the individual members. In battle he does not issue commands (tactics are not his strength), but he does serve as the group's front man: When you want to hire the Council, you come to Dorath.

Dorath is a hulking man with shining white teeth and dark eyes. His black hair is cut very short, and he has a silver earring. He wears a dark gray and blue cloak over his armor.

Dorath Kir: Male human Ftr7; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid; HD 7d10+21; hp 65; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+7/19–20, *+1 longsword*), +8/+3 ranged (1d8+4/x3, mighty composite longbow); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Ride +7, Spot +3, Listen +2; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), Whirlwind Attack.

Possessions: +1 half-plate, +1 large steel shield, +1 longsword, mighty masterwork composite longbow (+4), 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1, potion of endurance, potion of cure moderate wounds,* silver earring (50 gp), 654 gp.

Terquad

Terquad likes to kill people. Normally, that would be an asset in his line of work, but it can actually become a hindrance. He is such a bloodthirsty murderer that occasionally he wants to perform "jobs" he's not hired to do. You would never know that Terquad is so terrible by looking at him or speaking with him. He seems perfectly kind and charming. Despite her advances, he does not want a relationship with Varimer (see right) beyond simply working with her.

Terquad spends so much time in disguise that it is difficult to know what he really looks like. The truth is, he is bald, clean shaven, somewhat dark complected, and of average height and build.

Terquad: Male human Rog5/Asn1; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d6+5 (rogue) plus 1d6+1 (assassin); hp 29; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19–20, *+1 longsword*) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3 crit, shortbow); SA +4d6 sneak attack, death attack (DC 14); SQ evasion, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Climb +11, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +10, Forgery +11, Gather Information +5, Hide +11, Innuendo +7, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +10, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +4, Spot +8, Tumble +10; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: +1 longsword, +1 studded leather, masterwork buckler, *potion of cure moderate wounds,* scroll of *undetectable alignment, wand of alter self* (22 charges), masterwork composite shortbow, 20 arrows, 231 gp.

Spells Prepared (1): 1st—*obscuring mist.*

Spellbook: 1st—all.

Varimer

Varimer is the smartest member of the Council of Wrath. She often devises the plans and suggests tactics to the others. They have worked with her long enough to listen to her and do as she says—even Terquad and Enchilios (see next page), who are both intelligent in their own right.

Despite her profession, Varimer is not bloodthirsty. She assumes that everyone she kills deserves it and avoids harming anyone else if she can help it (she does whatever she has to do to protect herself, however). Varimer hates the fact that she feels so attracted to Terquad. She knows very well what a terrible person he is, but she lusts after him anyway.

Tall with short blond hair, Varimer bears a scar along the left side of her face. She usually conceals it with cosmetics.

Varimer: Female half-elf Rog5/Asn1; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d6 (rogue) plus 1d6 (assassin); hp 23; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Atk +8 melee (1d6/19–20, rapier) or +11 ranged (1d6+1/x3 crit, shortbow); SA +4d6 sneak attack, death attack (DC 15); SQ evasion, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Disable Device +9, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +13, Forgery +13, Gather Information +7, Heal +3, Hide +13, Innuendo +9, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +5, Spot +8, Tumble +13; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

Possessions: +1 composite shortbow, +1 leather armor, +1 large wooden shield, potion of cure serious wounds, 2

scrolls of *invisibility*, masterwork rapier, 20 masterwork arrows, 120 gp.

Spells Prepared (1): 1st—*change self*.

Spellbook: 1st—all.

Enchilios

Enchilios rarely speaks. Born with magical talents, he has avoided contact with others as much as possible in his life. He looks at his position on the Council apathetically—he feels neither joy nor sadness at the death of others. If given the choice, he prefers to remain invisible, or in the guise of someone else.

If necessary, and if funds are available, this sorcerer will create new alchemical items or potions for himself or the others to use in a particular mission.

Enchilios is terribly pale, with wispy blond hair that hangs down to his shoulders. He usually wears a long black cloak with gray trim. He displays his wands prominently—both are black metal shafts topped with beads, one red (*fireball*) and one green (*alter self*).

Enchilios: Male elf Sor6; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d4; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; Atk +2 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger), +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA spells; SQ elf abilities, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, +5; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 11, Chr 16.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +7, Bluff +6, Disguise +6, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5; Brew Potion, Craft Wand, Spell Focus: Evocation.

Special Qualities: Elf—immune to *sleep*; +2 saves against Enchantment spells or effects; low-light vision; +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

Possessions: *wand of fireball* (6th-level caster, 14 charges), *wand of alter self* (19 charges), scroll of *lightning bolt*, scroll of *charm person, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of charisma*, flask of acid, flask of alchemist's fire, 281 gp.

Spells Known (7/4/2/1): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield*; 2nd—*invisibility, web*; 3rd—*fireball*.

Spells Per Day: 6/6/5/3.

Smannet

Dorath found Smannet in an alley some months ago, horribly wounded and poisoned, having just escaped a vengeful pair of thugs it was trying to fool. Being an opportunist, Dorath took the doppelganger to a healer and struck a deal with it, allowing Smannet to join the Council as its newest member. Learning the craft of the rogue from Varimer, Smannet is quickly becoming one of the most vital members of the team.

Smannet always wears its *ring of protection*. It takes its shortbow and arrows only into situations where they fit the role it is playing.

Smannet: Doppelganger Rog3; CR 6; Medium-size shapechanger; HD 4d8+4 (doppelganger) plus 3d6+3 (rogue); hp 36; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, 2 slams), +7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, mighty composite shortbow); SA Detect thoughts, +2d6 sneak attack; SQ Alter self, immunities, AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15*, Climb +4, Disguise +15*, Forgery +4, Hide +5, Listen +14, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +9, Spot +11; Alertness, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: +2 *ring of protection*, mighty masterwork composite shortbow (+1), 20 arrows.

Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger can continuously detect thoughts as the spell cast by an 18th-level sorcerer (save DC 13). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Alter Self (Su): A doppelganger can assume the shape of any Small or Medium-size humanoid. This works like *alter self* as cast by an 18th-level sorcerer, but the doppelganger can remain in the chosen form indefinitely. It can assume a new form or return to its own as a standard action.

Immunities (Ex): Doppelgangers are immune to sleep and charm effects.

Skills: A doppelganger receives a +4 racial bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.

* When using *alter self*, a doppelganger receives an additional +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks. If it can read an opponent's mind, it gets a further +4 circumstance bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.

Garx

Garx was actually the first member to join the Council of Wrath. Long ago, Dorath was a less evilly-inclined adventurer. When his group of companions fell prey to some drow under the command of a mind flayer,

DM Tips

Unless your players are particularly paranoid, you might not even give them a chance to know that they are being scoped. Why would they be suspicious of a bartender, a blacksmith, or a shop clerk? In fact, if you do not normally play out mundane encounters, you might not want to even mention these at all. They are just a part of the normal routine of life. If the PCs have access to continual *true seeing* or the like, however, they may be alerted to the encounter (at least one involving Enchilios or Smannet) immediately.

On the other hand, if the PCs are inadvertently open to making new acquaintences, one of the assassins or the doppelganger might actually befriend them to learn even more about them.

Dorath was captured and tortured for many months. The mind flayer also had captured Garx, a phase spider, and was using its mental powers to control his actions. When Garx saw a chance to escape, he knew he could not simply shift to the Ethereal Plane (the mind flayer could follow him there). So instead, he freed Dorath from his cell and the two together escaped. They have been companions ever since.

Garx (phase spider): hp 41, see the *Monster Manual*, p. 150.

Encounter One: Gather Information

With the Council hired to take out the PCs, the first thing the members decide to do is learn all they can about their targets. At first, this means moving about whatever community they spend the most time in or, barring that, the community they are known to have most recently spent time in. While in disguise, Terquad, Varimer, and Smannet attempt to gather information about the PCs (Smannet does not have this skill, but its detect thoughts ability more than makes up for it). Garx usually keeps an eye on one or more of them from the Ethereal Plane. Dorath and Enchilios lie low. As subtly as possible, they attempt to learn general things like:

- Frequented hangouts
- Friends and enemies
- General capabilities (level)
- Overall outlook and behavior (alignment)
- Tactics
- Commonly used weapons, spells, etc.

The last two may be particularly hard to determine, but the Council members might pose as old friends, authorities, or prospective employers to get the information.

Eventually, they confront the PCs themselves. They almost always accomplish this contact innocuously in an urban area. Disguised as a merchant or a server at a tavern, Terquad and/or Varimer speak with the PCs, attempting to get an idea of their capabilities by asking about "past exploits." Smannet might just hang around the PCs in a crowded area, attempting to use its detect thoughts ability to learn whatever it can.

In this situation, Enchilios usually remains nearby, invisible. He watches and helps his comrades if trouble arises. Both Terquad and Varimer know that their evil natures are a liability if one of their targets is a paladin (who can detect evil). In this case, they utilize Smannet to make all direct contact with the PCs.

The assassins and the doppelganger never approach the characters without an escape plan. If somehow discovered by the PCs, they flee immediately. At this stage, they do not attack their targets, no matter how much Terquad would like to.

Encounter Two: Test the Waters (EL 5)

The next step comes a few days later, again, probably in a city or town. In disguise, Smannet or Varimer finds a typical thug, a group of thugs, or even another group of adventurers, and begins sowing the seeds of discontent. They tell the mark(s) that the PCs have been spreading vicious lies about them, are threatening to attack them, or something similar. They do whatever it takes to convince this group that they should confront or (hopefully) attack the PCs. Enchilios will use his scroll of *charm person* if needed.

The goal here, however, is not to kill or even necessarily really hurt the player characters. The goal is to get them into a fight with someone else and then watch—again, in disguise, invisible, or ethereal. Even Dorath hangs around for this step, but only in the background, drawing no attention to himself. (At this stage, the PCs have never seen him before and have no reason to believe he is anything by a passer-by.)

Unless a group or individual specific to the campaign is appropriate to turn against the PCs, use the three NPCs below as the Council's dupes. Of course, the PCs might successfully avoid the fight by talking to whomever the Council has set against them, using Diplomacy to smooth over the situation and convince them they've been lied to.

Carlatta: Female half-elf Ftr3; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d10 + 6; hp 27; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/18–20, rapier), +8 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SQ low-light vision, sleep immunity, resist enchantment; AL N; SV Fort +3+2 Con, Ref +1+3 Dex, Will +1+1 Wis; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Jump +7, Listen +2, Search

+1, Spot +2; Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse (rapier), Weapon Focus (rapier).

Special Qualities: Half elf—immune to *sleep*; +2 saves against Enchantment spells or effects; low-light vision; +1 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

Possessions: +1 rapier, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork composite longbow, 20 masterwork arrows, *potion of bull's strength*, 64 gp, 12 sp, and a gold ring (100 gp).

Veris: Male half-orc Ftr2; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d10+4 ; hp 19; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Atk +7 melee (1d12+3, greataxe), +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0**;** Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +0, Spot +1; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: Full plate, masterwork greataxe, light crossbow and 10 bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, 45 gp, 54 sp.

Ernest: Male human War1; CR 1; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Atk +4 melee (1d10+2, bastard sword), +1 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –1**;** Str 15, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Intimidate +4, Jump +2; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Possessions: Breastplate, masterwork bastard sword, large wooden shield, composite longbow and 20 arrows, *potion of cure light wounds*, 92 gp.

ENCOUNTER THREE: INSURANCE/BAIT

The next step for the Council of Wrath is to kidnap someone important to the PCs. Having used their resources to discover details about the PCs, like who their friends are, the Council chooses the weakest and most vulnerable among them. Then, they kidnap this person as quickly and discreetly as possible (and with Enchilios and his *invisibility* spells, it is most likely very quick and discreet). The victim is not harmed, but securely bound and hidden someplace out of the way.

The PCs may learn about the kidnapping (or at least the disappearance) of their friend soon afterward, depending on the situation. An investigation, using mundane means such as Search checks for clues and questioning anyone nearby, or magical means such as *divination, commune, locate creature,* or *scrying* may very well uncover the victim's location. If the Council of Wrath suspects that such abilities are within the means of their targets, they will use that fact to draw the PCs into a well-laid ambush.

ENCOUNTER FOUR: SHOWDOWN (EL 11)

Lastly, the Council of Wrath attacks the PCs, intending to kill them (unless they have been hired to do something else, like simply embarrass them). They strike wherever they know the PCs will be ahead of time—in a ruin the Council knows they are exploring, on the road, in a town, etc.

To prepare, Enchilios has already cast these spells:

- On himself: *mage armor, shield, expeditious retreat, invisibility.*
- On Smannet: *mage armor, invisibility*
- On Dorath: *invisibility*
- On Terquad: *invisibility*
- On the kidnapped victim: *invisibility*

And he has drunk his *potion of charisma*, making his *fireball* spells harder to resist.

Dorath drinks his *potion of endurance*. Varimer has cast *invisibility* on herself (using one of her scrolls).

Both Varimer and Tarquad have large scorpion venom on their blades (Fortitude save DC 18, 1d6 temporary Strength damage and 1d6 temporary Strength damage a minute later). They study the two characters that they have determined will be most vulnerable to their death attacks (wizards, sorcerers, bards, and rogues, in that order) for 3 rounds. Then Varimer whistles, alerting Enchilios that they are ready.

Enchilios, invisible, starts the ambush with a *fireball*. He stands over the kidnapped prisoner, who is securely tied up and also invisible (but he quickly dismisses the spell so no one is tempted to cast an area of effect spell on him). Next, the assassins and rogue attack with sneak (and death) attacks, then attempt to flank their foes. Enchilios supports them with *magic missiles* as his last two 1st-level spell slots. He is not afraid to use his open 3rd-level slots for *magic missiles*, as his wand is useful for *fireballs*. He saves his last 2nd-level slot for an *invisibility* spell to get away, if needed. If anyone moves

Intelligent NPCs

These NPCs are very smart, and they have gone to great lengths to learn all that they can about the PCs. If the PCs have some favorite tactic or a powerful weapon, such as *fireballs* or *cones of cold*, a *shocking burst* weapon, etc., the NPCs will use their listed funds to hire an NPC to create scrolls of *protection from elements*, or potions of the same. If the PCs like to use see invisible, the Council will use disguises and alter self rather than invisibility. The point is, play these NPCs as well prepared and very intelligent.

away from what probably becomes a thickly clustered melee, he targets them with a *fireball*.

Dorath stands invisibly next to Enchilios. If anyone approaches, he becomes visible and holds his weapon over the kidnapped victim, threatening to kill him or her with a *coup de grace* (he will do it if the PCs call him on it, and then he pretends to have other victims as well). His goal is to get the PCs to pause or even surrender. If successful in this ruse, he waits until they have their guard down, then attacks. Garx appears immediately and attacks as well. Otherwise, Garx phases in and attacks whenever appropriate.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Assuming the PCs survive, they will most likely want to look into why they were attacked. They need to track down whoever hired the Council of Wrath and make sure these employers don't try something similar again. If they find the employers or question the Council members, they could find out this information:

- The Council has no permanent base of operations; the members travel from town to town on jobs and meet in private rooms of various local taverns to set their plans in motion.
- For the above reason, the treasure they carry on them represents the extent of the Council's wealth. They invest their earnings in new equipment and magical items to help them in their work.
- The cost of their services varies depending on the difficulty of the job. However, it's never less than 1,000 gp. One-third of this fee is payable up front.
- The Council handles only one job at a time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monte Cook started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. In the employ of Iron Crown Enterprises, he worked with the *Rolemaster* and *Champions* games as an editor, developer, and designer.

In 1994 Monte came to work at TSR as a game designer. As a senior game designer with Wizards of the Coast, he codesigned the new edition of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and authored the DUNGEON MASTER's *Guide*. His newest release is *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil*.

A graduate of the Clarion West writer's workshop, Monte has also published short stories and two novels. In his spare time, he runs anywhere from one to three games per week, holds a yearly game convention at his house, builds vast dioramas out of LEGO building bricks, and reads a lot of comics.

Monte designed the July 2001 adventure, *The Ministry of Winds*, for the Official D&D Website. To read more of his recent d20 work and find out about his new imprint, Malhavoc Press, visit his website at `www.montecook.com`.